



ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN TRANSGENDER HEALTH

# Eating Disorders and Body Dissatisfaction

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Bucks LGBTQ Center at Bucks Support Services

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# Creating a Common Language

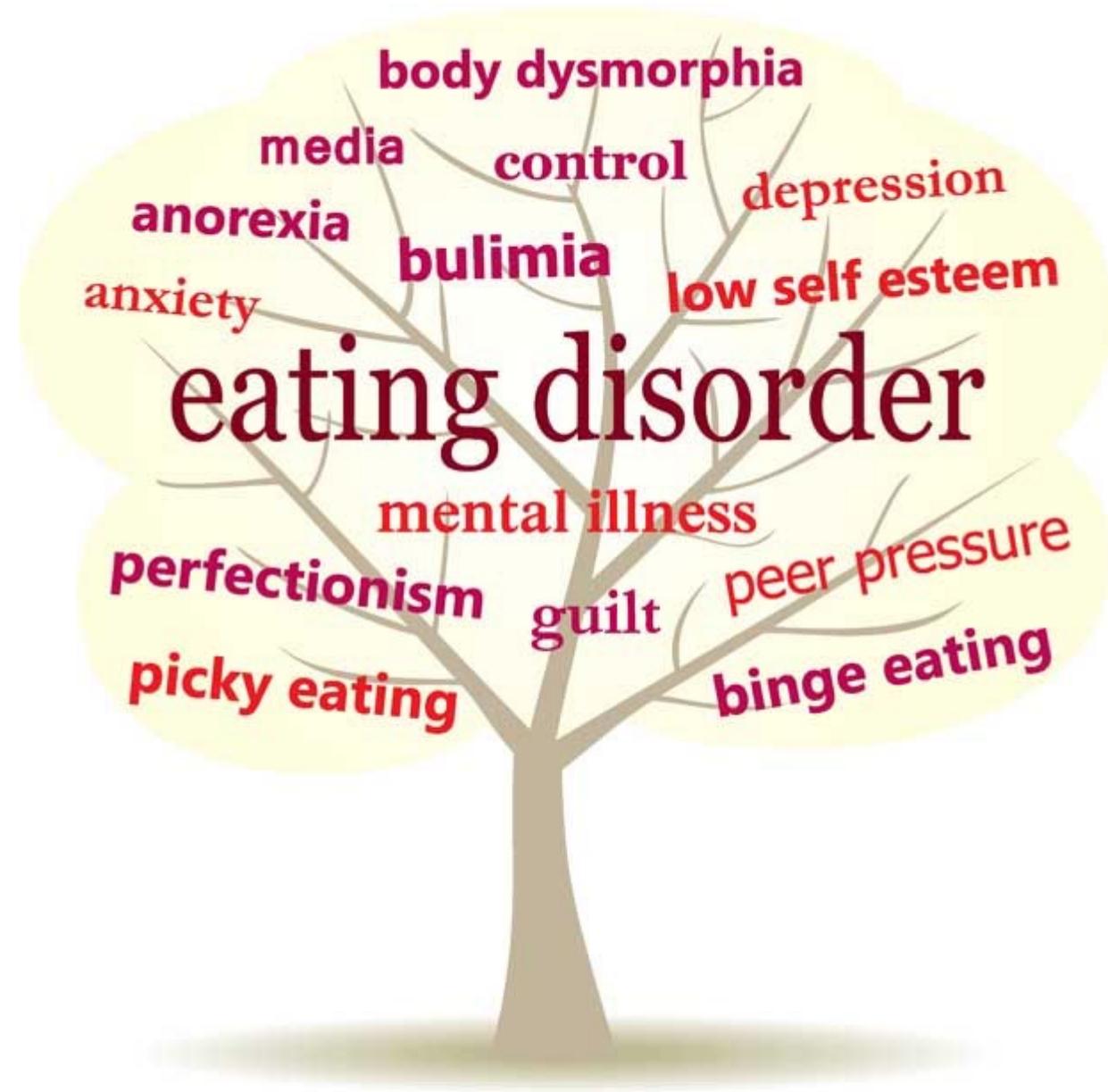


**Anorexia**

**Bulimia**

**Binge Eating Disorder**

**Other Specific Food  
& Eating Disorder  
(OSFED)**



# Body Image

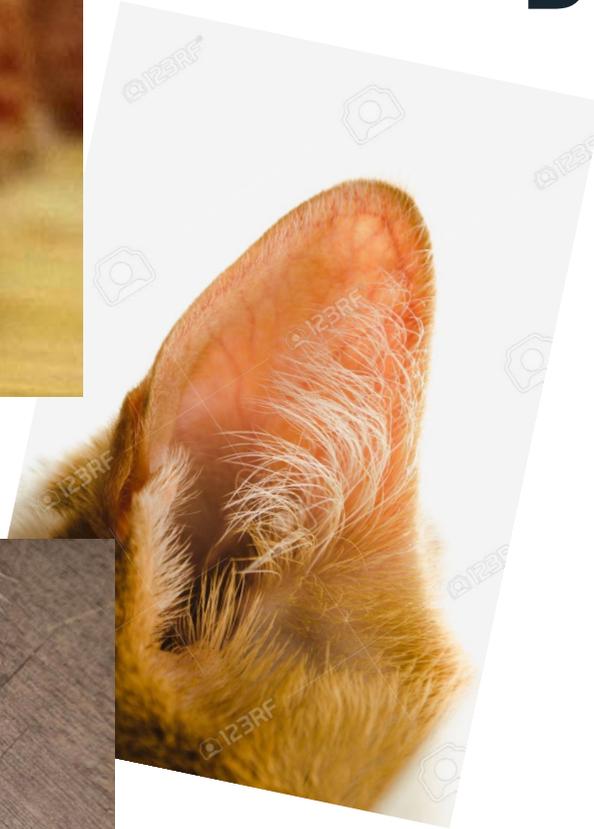
**How people see themselves  
when they look in the  
mirror or when they picture  
themselves in their mind**

*What matters most  
is how you see yourself.*

*Louie Bryan M. Lapat*



# Body Dissatisfaction



**The discomfort and discontent felt about the body – as a whole or specific parts**

# Cisgender Body Privilege

**The inherent benefits that certain groups of people have by being part of a majority group**

- My body matches my gender identity
- I can find clothing and shoe sizes that fit me
- My appearance does not cause strangers to ask what my “real name” is or question my pronoun choices
- People do not stare at me or at my dress
- I can find a provider who knows how to meet my medical and clinical needs

# Why this matters?

- Trans college students are diagnosed with **bulimia** or **anorexia** 4x more often than cis female peers
- 70% of TGE patients surveyed have experienced **discrimination in health care settings**
- Discrimination impacts **body image, access to resources**, and likelihood of asking for help



Data from the 2017 HEI &, <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/blog/shining-a-light-on-gender-identity-and-eating-disorders>

# Working at the intersection of...



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**Race**

National origin

Ethnicity

Age

Education

Ability status

**Body size**

Religion

Sexual / affectional orientation

Socioeconomic status

**Gender identity**

Health conditions

Recovery status

Others?

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# The Clinical Picture

Gender dysphoria (GD), Identity-based trauma (IBT), & Eating disorders (ED)

# Challenges Specific to TGE Clients

- More than 75% of TGE adolescents reported **mistreatment in school**, including verbal harassment, physical, & sexual assault
- Almost half of trans people report being **sexually assaulted** during their lifetime
- TGE youth report **suicidal ideation** rates around 42-46%, with approximately 32% attempting
- **Gender / body dysphoria** represents the distress related to living in a body that is incongruent with the internal gender identity, frequently coinciding with the desire to change the body and dissonance from gendered features (ie. Chest dysphoria, hip dysphoria, voice dysphoria)

1,093 MTF and FTM transgender persons surveyed

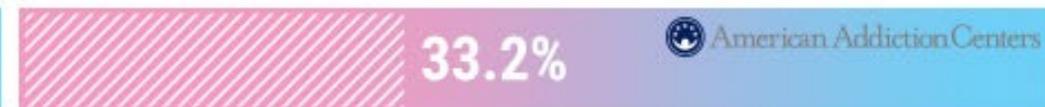
— AJPB —



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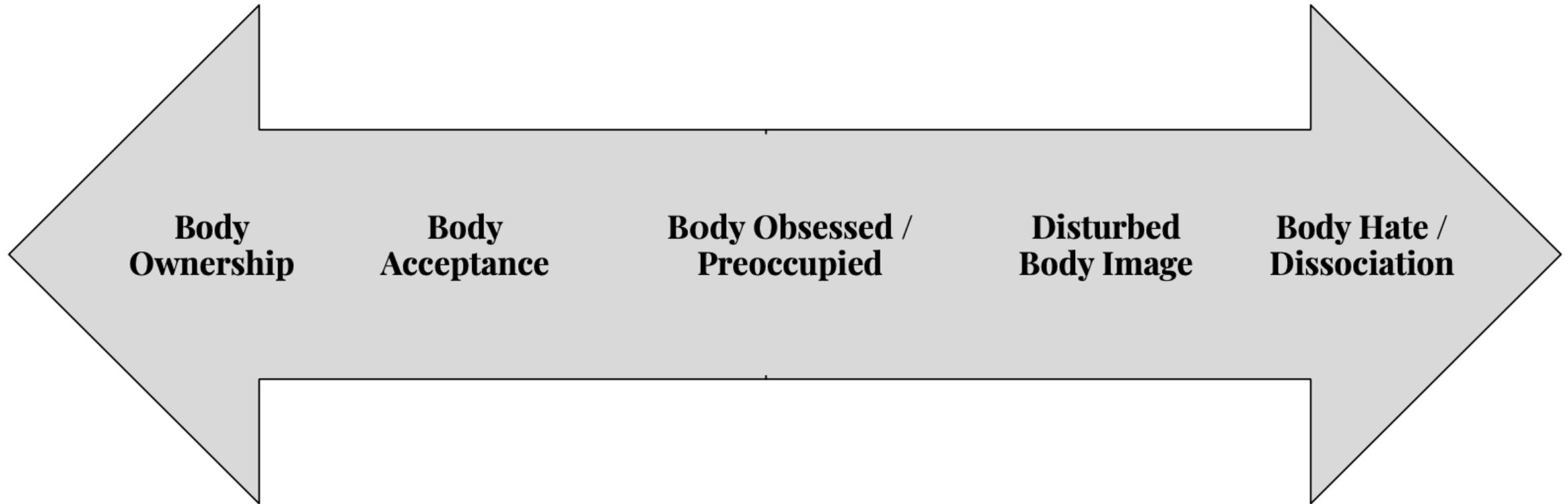
reported clinical depression as a result of their stigma



reported anxiety as a result of their stigma

American Addiction Centers

# Queering our Perspective on Body Image

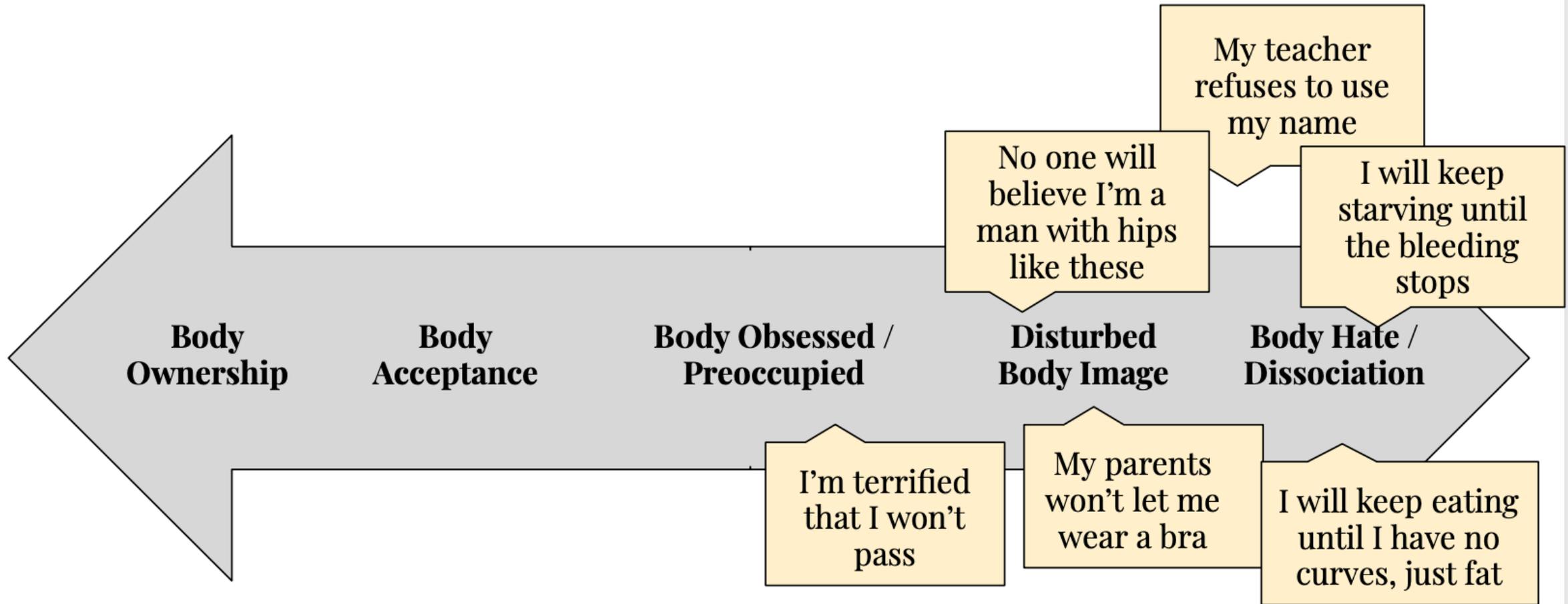


# Trans-Specific Body Image Challenges

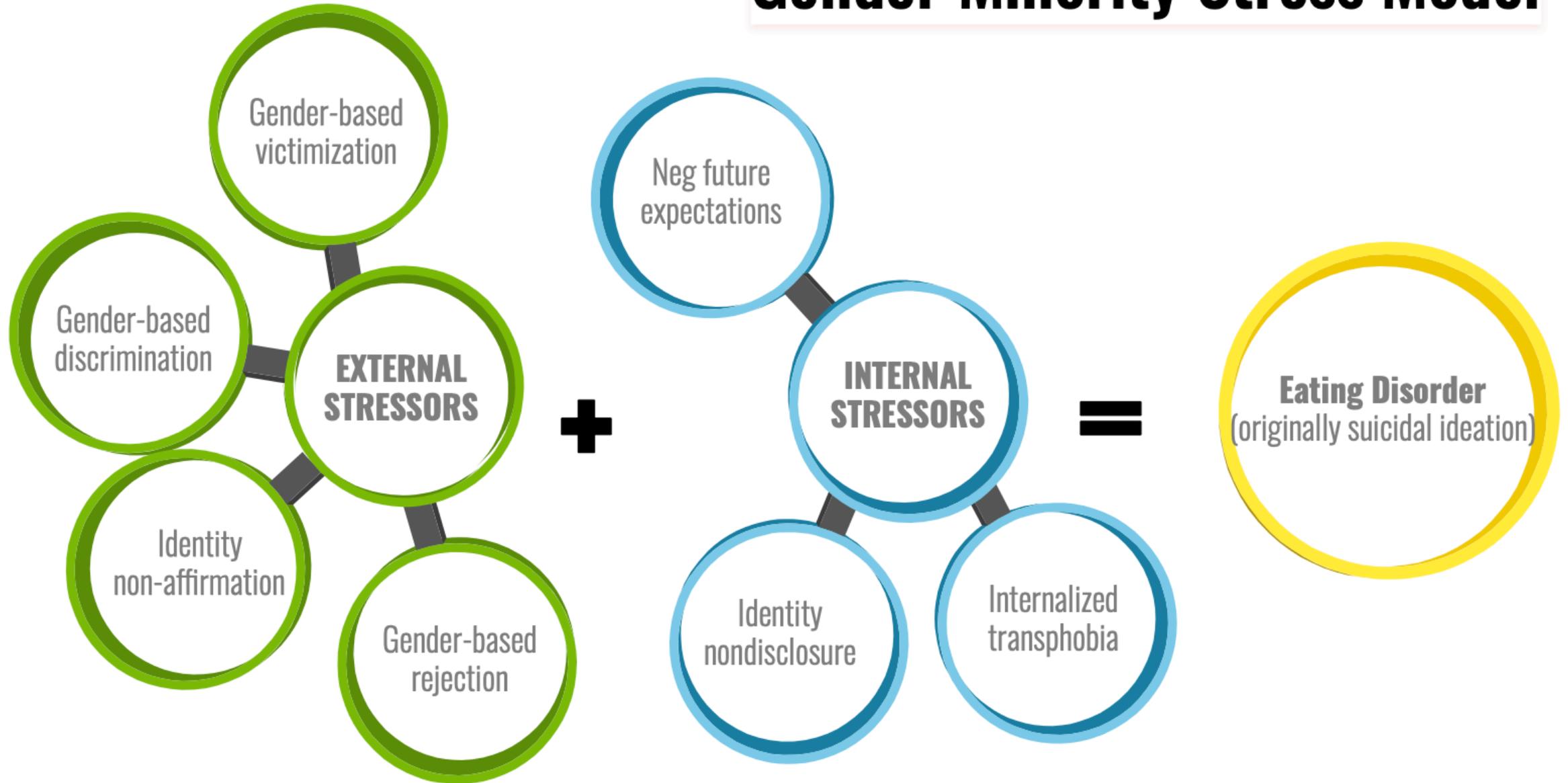
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# Queering our Perspective on Body Image

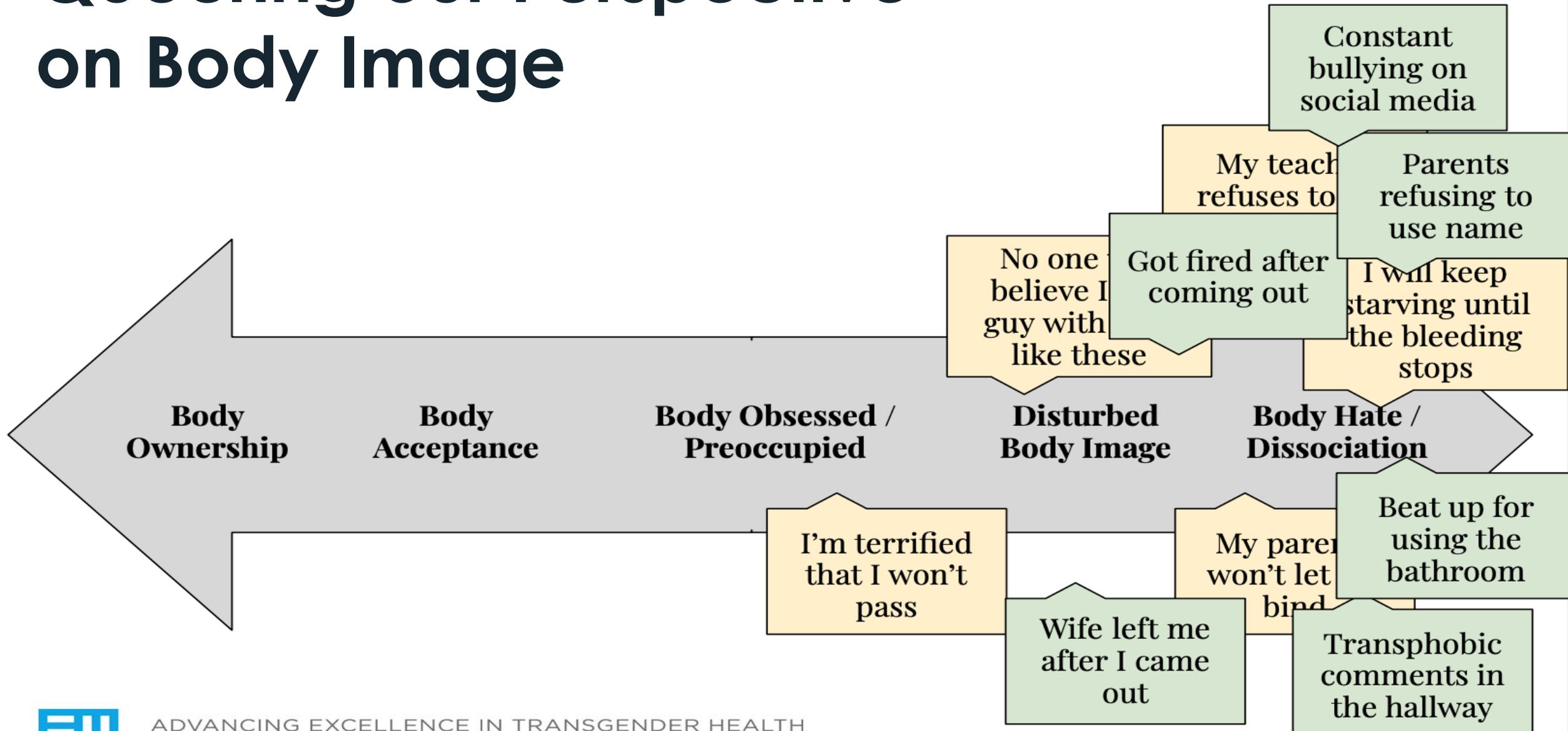


# Gender Minority Stress Model

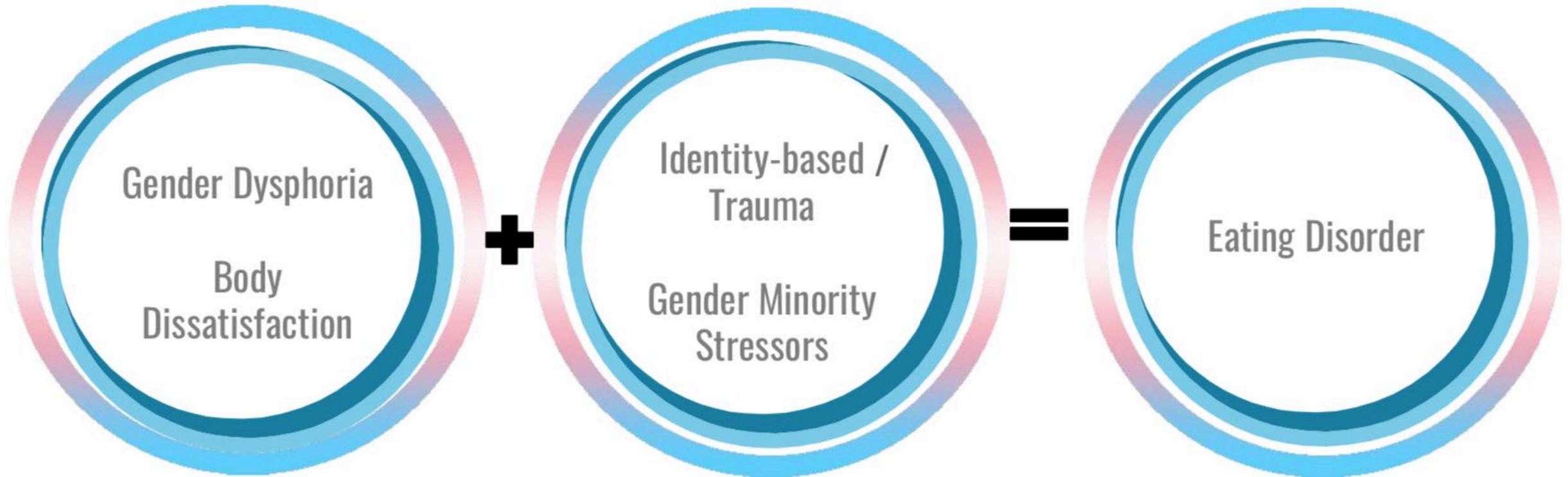


Hendricks & Testa, (2012); Testa et al., (2017)

# Queering our Perspective on Body Image



# Our Approach:



# How We Work with Body Image & EDs:

- Focus on body acceptance
- Emphasis on self-care
- Explore physical well-being
- Identify sources of pleasure
- Understand body cues



# Core Beliefs:

1. Identity is on a continuum and the full spectrum of gender expression is healthy, encouraged, and respected
2. Living in a body that is not congruent with one's gender identity can contribute to emotional distress
3. Navigating trauma, identity-based or otherwise, may increase stress levels
4. Clinicians need to create an intentionally inclusive space, engage in continuous self-reflection to address privilege, and maintain competency of practice
5. Advocacy is an essential component of this work

Dalzell, Protos, & Hunt (2019)



# Implementing this Approach

## Practical support for working with transgender and gender expansive clients

- Explore sources of support for TGE identity and eating disorder recovery
- Foster an environment in which clients feel respected in the uniqueness of their gender identities
- Value body diversity and expression
- Communicate understanding of gender expansiveness through use of language; own your mistakes
- Reject the gender binary; understand that gender is multidimensional
- Advocate for your clients as needed



# Implementing this Approach

## Practical support for working with transgender and gender expansive clients

- Recognize your own gender and body privilege
- Provide clients with space and reassurance to take their own gender journey, without an outcome in mind
- Be comfortable in discussing coming out and transition
- Accept that surgeries and other ways of affirming gender may be necessary for full body acceptance
- Partner with sources of support, such as eating disorder and trans health organizations
- When referring, assess whether programs honor diversity in body size and presentation (trans/non-binary)

# Thank you!

**Please contact us if you have additional questions**

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**www.bucks-lgbtq.com**  
*Website*

